

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Palmdale to Burbank Section

2014 SCOPING REPORT

APPENDICES

G – I

November 2014



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration



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Appendix G

Summary of Federal and State Agency Comments

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Federal Agency Comments

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

- Expand the study area to include the area east of SR 14.
- Please analyze the full impact of tunneling, including staging, storage, and spoil disposal.
- Please incorporate design modifications, where feasible, to minimize impacts to waters.
- Please analyze impacts on groundwater from tunneling, including groundwater drawdown, ground settlement, and dewatering of surface features.
- Please analyze impacts on flood control facilities, including those regulated under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

- Please provide a clear rationale for elimination of dropped alternatives, including a demonstration that these alternatives do not contain the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA). Specific alignments and stations that require additional justification include the Palmdale West Station, State Route (SR) 14 West Alternative, San Fernando Station Option, Branford Station Option, and SR 14 South alignment.
- A robust analysis of the direct alternative through the Angeles National Forest is needed to demonstrate whether or not this corridor may contain the LEDPA.
- Include all relevant features, such as staging areas and access roads, in addition to permanent features such as the rail corridor and power structures in the environmental footprint.
- Coordinate with the Angeles National Forest and consider if the Forest Management Plan may require an update for alternatives affecting the Angeles National Forest; if so please describe that process.
- Please consider the potential effects of tunneling on groundwater and groundwater recharge as well as the associated effect on surface features; also include analysis of the impacts of tunneling spoil disposal.
- Please provide a full quantification of the impacts of tunneling, with a quantitative breakdown of fill generated by distance tunneled, impacts of associated access and staging areas. Please provide a discussion of the cost, logistics and technology of tunneling.
- Please provide appropriate description of mitigation for restoration of temporary roads and staging areas; including revegetation.
- Please demonstrate that impacts to waters will be avoided to the maximum extent feasible along the SR 14 corridor and in the Angeles National Forest.
- Follow through on avoidance and minimization measures for waters included in the program environmental impact statement.
- Please ensure the range and analysis of alternatives meets the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act; include appropriate quantification of effects on waters including protected waters.
- Please quantify the avoidance benefits of each alternative for waters avoided.
- Please avoid or minimize impacts to the Santa Clara River; this feature provides important habitat to avian and other species.
- Please analyze impacts on special status species and wildlife movement corridors.
- Please analyze impacts on air quality; the region has impaired air quality with respect to ozone and particulate matter; identify impacts on sensitive receptors and potential creation of carbon monoxide hot spots.
- Please analyze the interaction of the project with regional transportation planning efforts.
- Please analyze impacts on environmental justice populations.

Federal Agency Comments

USEPA – Continued

- Please consider noise impacts.
- Please analyze the potential for induced growth at stations and design stations to facilitate connectivity between transit modes.
- Please consider the potential impacts of valley fever associated with construction related soil disturbance.
- Please analyze the potential interaction with and impacts on the high pressure gas main in Santa Clarita.
- Please analyze impacts on oil and gas fields, including the potential for accidental release of oil.
- Please provide a robust and appropriate analysis of cumulative impacts.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- The direct alternative may have impacts on special status species and waters; specific impacts include dewatering of surface features that provide habitat and impacts on wildlife connectivity.
- The sealed rail corridor will create a barrier to wildlife movement; the EIS should analyze effects on wildlife connectivity.
- Tunneling may result in significant groundwater impacts with associated loss of hydrology for surface waters; geotechnical studies should be included to help avoid these impacts. Previous projects such as the Inland Feeder Project have resulted in groundwater effects.
- Noise and lighting from the project may result in impacts on wildlife.
- The project may result in impacts on avian species associated with train collision or attraction to carrion on the right of way.
- The project has the potential to result in impacts on condors; electrocution and collision are potential impact mechanisms. Air flow pattern alteration and introduction of additional trash into the region may also be impact mechanisms.
- Please coordinate with the Condor Recovery Team for technical guidance and conduct appropriate preconstruction surveys as well as post-construction monitoring.
- The project may impact desert tortoises, particularly through attraction of ravens which are drawn to centers of human activity. Ravens predate tortoises thus increased human activity increases predation potential.
- The project may affect golden eagles; appropriate surveys and nest buffers should be used.
- The project may affect nesting birds; timing construction to avoid nesting season vegetation removal is the primary mitigation. Preconstruction surveys should also be used.
- Overhead power lines may impact avian species the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidance provides design criteria for reducing these effects.
- The project may affect avian species beyond those listed above; ensuring that the right of way fence is taller than the train will help reduce collision potential. The fence should also be gapless to reduce potential for carcasses on the track.
- Please coordinate with the Condor Recovery Team for technical guidance and conduct appropriate preconstruction surveys as well as post-construction monitoring.

State Agency Comments
Assemblyman Raul Bocanegra
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above ground facilities in the San Fernando Road vicinity will have significant community impacts; the direct alternatives through the Angeles National Forest may also disrupt homes and business and deter community development.
Assemblyman Scott Wilk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SR 14 alignment will impact schools and communities along the corridor.
California Department of Conservation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plugged and inactive oil wells in the vicinity of Sun valley and Burbank may be affected by the project; work that may interact with these features may require reabandonment to current standards.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project may affect wildlife movement corridors, including the Santa Clara River; elevated sections should be considered where feasible, to minimize impacts on wildlife movement. The Authority should conduct a study on wildlife movement supported by appropriate field surveys. The project may affect previously conserved lands; the interaction with these features should be analyzed. The project may affect waters and drainages; impact analysis should include an assessment of these features including dryland features and associated habitat. The project may affect fully protected species such as white-tailed kite, peregrine falcon, and three spine stickleback. The project may also affect special status plant and animal species, including other avian species. Authorization under the California Endangered Species Act may be required. Impact analysis for special status plants should be supported by appropriately timed floristic surveys. The project may affect Joshua trees; if impacts cannot be avoided mitigation should include off site preservation with appropriate conservation easements and funding. The project may affect desert tortoise; surveys should be conducted and should extent to Highway 138. The project may affect waters and wetlands and require authorization from CDFW; note that CDFW regulates features that extend beyond USACE jurisdiction. Because of the potential to impact biological and water resources the alternatives analysis should identify means of avoiding these resources. The impact analysis should include analysis of impacts on drainage patterns and groundwater. Mitigation for impacts on biological resources should include on-site restoration and offsite preservation with appropriate legal and financial mechanisms to protect these lands in perpetuity. The project may affect nesting birds; vegetation removal should be timed to avoid the nesting season; in the alternative buffers should be observed for nesting birds. A minimum of 300 feet should be used for passerine birds and 500 for raptors. Mitigation should include a Nesting Bird Management Plan.
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project may result in traffic impacts; mitigation should include limiting truck trips to off peak commute hours.
California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project may interact with the California Aqueduct; rights of entry and encroachment permits may be required and should be coordinated with DWR.

State Agency Comments
California State Lands Commission (CSLC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project may affect biological resources, aquatic resources, and result in generation of greenhouse gases. These impacts should be analyzed and mitigation should include performance standards. The environmental document should mention that title to cultural resources on school or submerged lands is held by the CSLC.
Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project may affect cultural resources; mitigation should include compliance with California state law related to coordination with the NAHC and the Native American community.
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize alternatives that avoid wetland impacts. Ensure that alternatives each include all temporary and permanent facilities and associated structures. Analyze impacts on waters and associated beneficial uses. Provide narrative and quantitative thresholds of significance when analyzing impacts to waters and water quality. Consult with the SWRCB in developing mitigation for impacts to waters and water quality. Consider the beneficial uses defined in the Regional Water Quality Control Plans when analyzing impacts and developing mitigation. Please use impact analysis methodology consistent with guidelines developed by the California Water Quality Monitoring Council, specifically the Tenets of a State Wetland and Riparian Monitoring Program. Please consider avoidance the primary mitigation for waters; buffers for waters should be biologically justified. Compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable impacts. Please use appropriately qualified construction monitors for monitoring impacts on waters and biological resources. Please analyze impacts to waters using a watershed approach. Low impact development (LID) techniques should be used for impervious surfaces. Please provide a robust analysis of cumulative effects and use design modifications to lessen cumulative effects.

Appendix H

Federal Scoping Meeting Minutes

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CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority

Federal Family Scoping Meeting

August 8, 2014 – 9:30 to 11:30am

California High-Speed Rail Authority – Southern California Office

700 N Alameda Ave, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071

Attendees:

Essam Alameddine, California High-Speed Rail Authority	Mark McLoughlin, California High-Speed Rail Authority
Jennifer Blonn, Environmental Protection Agency	Kavita Mehta, URS
Michelle Boehm, California High-Speed Rail Authority	Greg Hoisington, URS
Karl Fielding, Parsons Brinckerhoff	Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board
Flo Gardipee, US Fish & Wildlife Service	Stephanie Perez, Federal Railroad Administration
Judy Hohman, US Fish & Wildlife Service	Brittany Struck, National Marine Fisheries Service
Kathryn Hurd, Federal Railroad Administration	Steve Vaughn, US Army Corps of Engineers
Nicole Johnson, US Bureau of Reclamation	Juan Carlos Velasquez, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Spencer MacNeil, US Army Corps of Engineers	Becky Victorine, US Bureau of Reclamation
Sarvy Mahdavi, Environmental Protection Agency	Connell Dunning, Environmental Protection Agency

Meeting Notes:

Stephanie Perez, with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), introduced the meeting. Representatives from each agency introduced themselves. She also briefly listed the federal agencies involved in the project.

Dave Navecky, from the Surface Transportation Board (STB), briefly discussed what the STB does and its involvement in the project. The STB is headquartered in Washington DC with 140 employees. It was ruled last year that it has jurisdiction over California High-Speed Rail (HSR) because of its connection with Amtrak it would be part of the interstate rail network. As a cooperating agency, STB will be involved with scoping and issue identification, EIS content, and review of draft documents. It will base its decision on transportation and environmental concerns.

Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director with the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), delivered the remainder of the presentation.

There are two phases to the project: Phase 1 is from San Francisco to Anaheim, while Phase 2 extends the system from Los Angeles to San Diego and from Merced to Sacramento. An early priority for the Authority is to close the rail gap between the Central Valley and the Los Angeles Basin.

Construction Package 1 has been awarded. It is a design build contract. Preconstruction activities have been advanced. They are using low emission Tier IV equipment. Preliminary activities (demolition, test pile work, etc.) have started.

The project is funding and cooperating with local agencies to advance southern California connectivity projects. They include: the Regional Connector which will go under downtown to connect local Metro lines so it will be possible, for example, to take a one seat ride from Long Beach to Santa Monica; work with Metrolink on a positive train control system to bring safety requirements online.

The Authority is working with local agencies on bookend projects. These are projects that make immediate improvements to passenger rail service and also prepare for high-speed rail in the future. They include double tracking projects, grade separation, etc. to support an integrated regional rail network. The biggest of these projects is the Southern California Regional Interconnector Project which will extend four tracks through Union Station, allowing Metrolink and Amtrak trains to run all the way through the station and loop back around to the mainline. This improvement is anticipated to reduce emission by 40% as trains will not have to idle in the station as long. This also helps support the arrival of HSR at Union Station.

\$250 million has been allocated from cap and trade funds for this fiscal year and HSR will receive an annual appropriation going forward. The next cap and trade auction is in January. This could advance construction on multiple sections at the same time and hopefully bring high-speed rail to Southern California sooner. It also may advance planning for the XpressWest project which would connect Victorville to Las Vegas and Palmdale to Victorville leading to interstate high-speed rail travel.

Palmdale to Los Angeles has evolved over time. There were original scoping meetings in 2007. Since that time the Authority has moved forward with a series of Alternative Analyses (AAs) to develop alignments that minimize resource impacts and minimize community impacts.

Karl Fielding with Parsons Brinckerhoff summarized the history of the alignments. The alignments south of Palmdale had a range of station options with a center point in Sylmar. The I-5 and SR 14 alignments were studied. There was a lot of feedback on an SR 14 alignment vs. a Soledad Canyon alignment after which Soledad Canyon was advanced. The programmatic decision out of the 2005 Statewide EIR/EIS selected the SR 14 corridor instead of the I-5 corridor. As part of the Palmdale to Los Angeles Preliminary Alternative Analysis (PAA), a wide corridor between Palmdale and Sylmar was studied with numerous alignments considered. The initial alternatives included two station options in Palmdale and station options in San Fernando, Branford, Burbank (Buena Vista). After the 2011 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA), some lines to Union Station were removed and some station options in the San Fernando Valley were removed. There were no stations removed in the 2012 SAA.

There have been over 100 meetings since the last project update. This past spring there were five community meetings in San Fernando, Burbank, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, and at Los Union Station. The majority of attendees have been favorable of the project. Some attendees expressed opposition towards the project and raised concerns about potential impacts to communities and resources such as noise, groundwater, quality of life, and health concerns. There is strong support for the Palmdale Transit Center and Bob Hope Airport stations.

The feedback incorporated into the 2014 SAA included refinements across alignments, updated station locations. The area includes over 60 miles of different types of communities and different geographical constraints. The 2014 SAA looks at two different segments: Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles. Looking at it as two different segments in separate environmental documents has made it easier to look at more specific issues including interaction with the LA River, the Santa Clara river area, etc.

The Authority is in the middle of holding a series of seven scoping meetings in the Palmdale to Los Angeles sections. We are talking about both sections at the meetings and started discussion on studying a more direct corridor from Burbank to Palmdale. This corridor would likely require a lot tunneling. Community feedback, resource agency feedback, etc. is being considered during the comment period. The corridor is being looked at to see if it makes sense to study through the EIR/EIS process. The Palmdale to Burbank section would take about 20 minutes to

travel. It will be a transformation for those communities. In Palmdale, there is a possibility for interstate high-speed rail. At Bob Hope Airport, there is air-to-rail connectivity and Metrolink-to-HSR connectivity.

The Burbank to Los Angeles section is 15 miles through a highly urban area. This section will follow the existing railroad corridor.

The station location evaluation has a set of screening criteria and considerations which include multimodal mobility, opportunities for active transportation, TOD, robust sustainable design policy, location sensitive parking, etc.

The Bob Hope Airport station will offer air-to-rail, rail-to-rail, and rail-to-transit opportunities. It opens up regional opportunities and connectivity for SoCal rail passengers to connect to the Hollywood Way Station, Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, and linkBurbank. The Pacific Surfliner train that runs from San Luis Obispo to San Diego and includes a stop in Burbank is the second most travelled Amtrak line in the country.

Union Station is going through a Master Plan process in which Metro is planning how to reconfigure the station. This brings many opportunities to high-speed rail.

The evolution of the environmental process started in 2005 with the completion of the program level EIR/EIS, scoping meetings were held in 2007, the alternative analyses were developed, and now we are here in 2014 with an amendment to the original scoping process and the consideration of two different sections.

The current scoping process includes seven different meetings to provide all the affected communities and opportunity to get information and participate in the comment process. Three meetings (Palmdale, Burbank, and Santa Clarita) have been completed with more than 250 attendees.

A brief timeline of planned activities includes the establishment of two independent sections, the study of an alternative corridor, continuation of technical meetings, engagement with stakeholders and conducting scoping meetings. In fall of 2014, there will a presentation to the Board of Directors (September 16th), an environmental analysis will be conducted, technical meetings and engagement with stakeholders will continue. Moving beyond that into 2015 and further, environmental documents will be released, connectivity and MOU projects will be completed, there will be more public meetings, etc. Throughout this entire process federal agency participation in public scoping meetings is welcomed, helpful, and highly encouraged.

Stephanie Perez with the FRA presented on the federal land along potential alignments. There are agencies with ownership/jurisdiction along the alignments including DOD facilities, US Forest Service Angeles National Forest, Bureau of Land Management property, etc. This meeting is being held to provide an opportunity for agencies to provide comments and ask questions about the project as related to each agency's area of expertise and jurisdiction. With the introduction of the new corridor, we need the agencies to provide specific feedback about any potential jurisdictional conflicts with the proposed study area. This could include information on critical habitat, water, species of concern, Section 408, current projects in the area, etc. It is most helpful to put these in writing.

Michelle Boehm brought up that something to look at are the advances in tunneling technology in the last few years. Long straight tunnels through the mountains, minimizing surface impacts, are being looked at.

Questions & Comments:

- Spencer Mac Neil, US Army Corps of Engineers, asked about the estimations on the length of tunnels.

- The current criteria for tunnel length, as utilized in the Program EIR/EIS, were discussed. Michelle Boehm noted that Switzerland is building much longer tunnels - as long as 35 miles.
 - Spencer responded that it is important to avoid waterways and riverine habitat.
- Spencer MacNeil mentioned the importance of including and evaluating an alignment that would avoid the Santa Clara River and other waters of the U.S., and appreciates any alternative that would avoid discharging fill into surface waters, including within the Angeles National Forest (by tunneling). Spencer MacNeil inquired whether the Forest Service has key environmental concerns about potential alternatives that could affect their land and asked for an elaboration on current discussions with the Forest Service.
 - The Authority and FRA have discussed the possibility of cooperating agency status with the Forest Service and have introduced the concept of the study corridor. The Forest Service has expressed its willingness to continue to discuss these issues as the study of alternatives moves forward.
- Flo Gardipee, US Fish & Wildlife Service, has been coordinating with a Fish & Wildlife Service biologist in their Carlsbad office. She related numerous issues with the Angeles National Forest. It's a great alternative for issues with surface species. Flo will submit a list of species of concern. She is also concerned about tunneling because of dewatering of the groundwater.
- Jennifer Blonn, Environmental Protection Agency, mentioned that the impacts of groundwater can affect surface water in the long term. Understanding groundwater will be important.
- Spencer MacNeil is also concerned about activities that could affect waters of the U.S. on the surface through groundwater changes; this potential impact should be addressed. US Army Corps of Engineers has a regulatory responsibility to avoid and minimize discharges of dredged and fill material into waters of the U.S. and will also consider whether the proposed project would be contrary to the public interest.
- Flo Gardipee will forward email messages from Fish & Wildlife Service contact. They are preparing responses to the NOP and will be sending them on to FRA and the Authority.
- Stephanie Perez mentioned that her main point of contact for the US Forest Service is Tyrone Kelly, the Region 5, Regional Engineer .
- Flo Gardipee asked why the decision to look at two different sections was made.
 - Stephanie Perez explained that the decision to break it up in to two sections with stations at each end was so that individual environmental documents could be developed for each section. If you're in both sections, you can send one letter and note that it's applicable for both.
 - Flo Gardipee mentioned that biologists are more concerned with Palmdale to Burbank.
- Stephanie Perez mentioned that the Obama Administration has issued a directive to streamline the federal permitting process, and the implementation of this for the HSR project is being directed by FRA as the lead federal agency. Feedback from federal agencies on specific needs is helpful.
- Judy Hohman, US Fish & Wildlife Service, requested information on construction and operations. How will the tunnel be constructed? How are electricity lines constructed? Where will those lines be? Where can she go to find information?
 - Michelle Boehm suggested she look at the May 2014 SAA. It includes a conceptual level of information. We are moving forward with environmental documentation that covers all of those issues. Since we have not advanced design, we are not there yet. It will be steel on steel electric rail. The Authority can send her link to technical memos if she provides which areas she wants. We are currently in early meetings with transmission providers.
- Connell Dunning, Environmental Protection Agency, mentioned it would be helpful to see a basic comparative analysis that we had with the programmatic level with the detailed alternative analysis.
- Connell Dunning asked if we would lose riders if the train does not reach San Fernando.

- Michelle Boehm explained that the further we get into San Fernando Valley, the more riders we get. There are more riders at Burbank than at a northern station. Further north they have Metrolink access to take to Burbank.
- Spencer MacNeil mentioned how the car company Tesla recognizes that there are air emissions associated with the power used to recharge their car batteries. He suggested the Authority/FRA/STB tell a more complete story with respect to air emissions, recognizing that the power used for HSR has to come from somewhere and that power generation results in emissions.
 - Michelle Boehm explained that we have people specifically focused on sustainability and we have sustainability guidelines. We have a target of zero emissions and need to dig into issues of transmission and how to get to zero emissions. There are areas in Southern California with a lot of renewable energy generation that could be a potential source of power for HSR.
- KMZ and GIS files of the alignments were requested by EPA and USFWS. These will be provided.
- Mark McLoughlin is the Authority's Director of Environmental Services in Sacramento. Michelle Boehm is the Southern California Regional Director in Los Angeles. There is a regional office now located in Los Angeles, please come visit. Stephanie Perez is the FRA Federal agency lead and the point of contact for federal agencies.
- The minutes and PowerPoint presentation will be sent out in the next week.

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Appendix I
Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section
Scoping Report (2007) Web Location

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Los Angeles to Palmdale Project EIR/EIS Scoping Report (2007)

The Los Angeles to Palmdale Project EIR/EIS Scoping Report (2007) is available on the Authority's website (www.hsr.ca.gov).

For direct access, the report and appendices are available at:

www.hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Statewide_Rail_Modernization/Project_Sections/palmdale_losangeles.html

The screenshot shows the California High-Speed Rail Authority website. The header includes the CA.GOV logo, the Authority's name, and navigation links for HOME, ABOUT US, PROGRAMS, NEWSROOM, and BOARD OF DIRECTORS. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled "Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section" and includes a breadcrumb trail: Home > Programs > Statewide Rail Modernization > Project Sections > Palmdale Losangeles. The page lists various project sections and archives. The "Scoping" section is highlighted, showing a list of documents including the Draft Scoping Report. The "High-Speed Rail Project Sections" sidebar lists routes from San Francisco to San Jose to Los Angeles to San Diego. The "Archives" sidebar lists the Altamont Corridor and Merced to Bakersfield.

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Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section

Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section Map

- Community Open Houses Spring 2014: Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section
- 2014 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA)
- Supplemental Alternative Analysis (SAA)
- Preliminary Alternatives Analysis (AA)
- Scoping**
 - Palmdale to LA: Appendix H – Presentation and Meeting Notes
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 - Palmdale to LA: Draft Scoping Report**
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 - Palmdale to LA: Scoping Welcome Sheet
 - Palmdale to LA: Scoping Welcome Sheet (en Espanol)
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 - HSR Comment Form
 - HSR Comment Form (en Espanol)
 - HSR Comment Form (Armenian)
 - HSR Scoping Meeting Mailer
 - HSR Scoping Meeting Mailer (Armenian Insert)
 - Updated Fact Sheet (Armenian)
- Notice of Intent / Notice of Preparation
- Public Outreach Materials
- Technical Material and Memorandum

High-Speed Rail Project Sections

- San Francisco to San Jose
- San Jose to Merced
- Merced to Sacramento
- Merced to Fresno
- Fresno to Bakersfield
- Bakersfield to Palmdale
- Palmdale to Burbank
- Burbank to Los Angeles
- Los Angeles to Anaheim
- Los Angeles to San Diego

Archives

- Altamont Corridor
- Merced to Bakersfield

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